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“These manual processes (including, among things, printing schedules, employee bidding, and then assigning employees to schedules) are very time consuming for both their employees and their supervisor. To address these problems, known workforce management solutions, such as TotalView® from IEX Corporation, have included a schedule bidding function. The IEX TotalView schedule bidding function was introduced commercially in late 2001 to allow agents to bid for work assignments that best met their personal scheduling needs. In operation at the time, the TotalView system created schedule patterns using average forecast staffing requirements over a selected time period. Created patterns were then “opened” to employees for bidding. This was not an automated process, and employees did not use their computers (or the Web) to bid on schedules. Rather, once the schedule patterns were finalized, a “common report” was printed by or otherwise made available by the system. This common report was a report that contained a listing of all schedule patterns. Thereafter, each agent (in seniority or ranked order) elected which schedule he or she desired by writing in their name next to the desired schedule pattern. Thus, a higher seniority or ranked agent selected his or her schedule first, and only then could lower ranked agents make their selections. Agents did not work with the common report concurrently. After all the agents (in ranked order) made their respective selections, a scheduling analyst would enter each agent’s selection into the TotalView Workforce Management system. Once the agents were assigned to schedule patterns, the scheduling analyst would then create schedules for a given date range and agents would be assigned to the schedules they selected. This was a manual process.”